



New documents on political and social issues

June 2009

AMERICA'S 11 MOST ENDANGERED HISTORIC PLACES

National Trust for Historic Preservation, May 2009

<http://www.preservationnation.org/issues/11-most-endangered/>

This year marks the 22nd annual list of America's 11 Most Endangered Historic Places. Since 1988, the National Trust for Historic Preservation has used this list as a powerful alarm to raise awareness of the serious threats facing the nation's greatest treasures. It has become one of the most effective tools in the fight to save the country's irreplaceable architectural, cultural and natural heritage.

CENSUS BUREAU ESTIMATES NEARLY HALF OF CHILDREN UNDER AGE 5 ARE MINORITIES

U.S. Census Bureau, May 14, 2009

<http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/releases/archives/population/013733.html>

The report shows that the nation is becoming older and more racially and ethnically diverse. The estimates found that nearly half (47 percent) of the nation's children younger than five were a minority in 2008, with 25 percent being Hispanic. For all children under 18, 44 percent were a minority and 22 percent were Hispanic.

THE CONDITION OF EDUCATION 2009

U.S. Department of Education, May 28, 2009

<http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2009/2009081.pdf>

The report summarizes important developments and trends in education using the latest available data. It presents 46 indicators on the status and condition of education. The indicators represent a consensus of professional judgment on the most significant national measures of the condition and progress of education for which accurate data are available. The 2009 print edition includes 46 indicators in five main areas: (1) participation in education; (2) learner outcomes; (3) student effort and educational progress; (4) the contexts of elementary and secondary education; and (5) the contexts of postsecondary education.

CRIME IN THE UNITED STATES: PRELIMINARY ANNUAL UNIFORM CRIME REPORT JANUARY TO DECEMBER 2008

U.S. Department of Justice, June 1, 2009

<http://www.fbi.gov/ucr/08aprelim/>

According to the FBI's Preliminary Annual Uniform Crime Report, the nation experienced a 2.5 percent decrease in the number of violent crimes and a 1.6 percent decline in the number of property crimes for 2008 compared with data from 2007. The report is based on information that the FBI gathered from 12,750 law enforcement agencies that submitted six to 12 comparable months of data to the FBI for both 2007 and 2008.

THE ECONOMIC CASE FOR HEALTH CARE REFORM

Council of Economic Advisers, Executive Office of the President, June 2009

http://www.whitehouse.gov/assets/documents/CEA_Health_Care_Report.pdf

The Council of Economic Advisers (CEA) has undertaken a comprehensive analysis of the economic impacts of health care reform. The report provides an overview of current economic impacts of health care in the United States and a forecast of where the U.S. are headed in the absence of reform; an analysis of inefficiencies and market failures in the current health care system; a discussion of the key components of health care reform; and an analysis of the economic effects of slowing health care cost growth and expanding coverage.

EMPLOYMENT CHARACTERISTICS OF FAMILIES IN 2008

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, May 27, 2009

<http://www.bls.gov/news.release/famee.nr0.htm>

The share of families with an unemployed member rose from 6.3 percent in 2007 to 7.8 percent in 2008, the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the U.S. Department of Labor reported today. The proportion of families with an unemployed member in 2008 neared the recent peak of 8.1 percent in 2003. Of the nation's 77.9 million families, 82.2 percent had at least one employed member in 2008, down by 0.4 percentage point from 2007.

ESTIMATES OF JOB CREATION FROM THE AMERICAN RECOVERY AND REINVESTMENT ACT OF 2009

Council of Economic Advisers, Executive Office of the President, May 2009

http://www.whitehouse.gov/assets/documents/Job-Years_Revised5-8.pdf

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) was designed to save and create jobs, as well as to cushion the economic downturn and make crucial public investments. At the time of passage, the Council of Economic Advisers (CEA) made estimates of the employment effects of the Act for the economy as a whole. As the money is being distributed by the various agencies, there is interest in estimates of the likely jobs effects of the individual pieces. Of course, as projects swing into action, the government will gather actual data on reported job creation. This report describes the estimating procedures used so far; specifies procedures to be used by recipients for estimating job creation going forward; discusses reporting requirements for job creation; and describes the procedures the CEA will use to evaluate the job creation and retention benefits of the ARRA going forward.

HEALTH DISPARITIES: A CASE FOR CLOSING THE GAP

Healthreform.gov, June 9, 2009

http://www.healthreform.gov/reports/healthdisparities/disparities_final.pdf

U.S. Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretary Kathleen Sebelius released a report on health disparities in America and participated in a White House Health Care Stakeholder Discussion on the importance of reform that reduces disparities that exist in our current health care system. The report also notes that 40 percent of low-income Americans do not have health insurance. About one-third of the uninsured have a chronic disease, and they are six times less likely to receive care for a health problem than the insured. In contrast, only 6 percent of high-income Americans lack insurance.

INDIGENOUS PEOPLE

U.S. Department of State, Bureau of International Information Programs, June 2009

<http://www.america.gov/media/pdf/ejs/0609.pdf>

The June 2009 edition of eJournal USA provides insight into Native Americans and other indigenous peoples. Articles provide historical background and look at issues surrounding their languages and culture, their legal status, and how they are networking around the world.

LOW-INCOME WORKING FAMILIES: UPDATED FACTS AND FIGURES

The Urban Institute, June 1st, 2009

<http://www.urban.org/publications/411900.html>

A large percentage of American families have low incomes, which lead to a host of challenges and disadvantages for both parents and children. In 2006, one out of every three families with children had incomes below twice the federal poverty level (FPL): \$40,888 for a family with two adults and two children. While these families face many of the same challenges as other families, they are particularly financially vulnerable. This fact sheet provides statistics on the work effort, earnings, health care access and other characteristics of these families.

THE POWER OF JUSTICE: APPLYING INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS STANDARDS TO AMERICAN DOMESTIC PRACTICES

Center for American Progress, June 17, 2009

http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2009/06/human_rights.html

The United States is emerging from a period that witnessed an unprecedented plunge in its worldwide popularity and credibility caused in good part by its own human rights violations connected to the so-called “war on terror.” Today, many Americans are eager to see the United States restore its international standing and they recognize that will entail pursuing security through diplomacy and international institutions and not just military force.

PUBLIC BACKS AFFIRMATIVE ACTION, BUT NOT MINORITY PREFERENCES

Pew Research Center for the People & the Press, June 2, 2009

<http://pewresearch.org/pubs/1240/sotomayor-supreme-court-affirmative-action-minority-preferences>

With the Supreme Court expected to soon rule on a case involving job discrimination claims by white firefighters, and Supreme Court nominee Judge Sonia Sotomayor's decision in a lower court ruling on the case drawing scrutiny, there is renewed focus on public opinion about affirmative action programs and overall efforts to improve the position of minorities in this country. The public has generally been supportive of such efforts, but is decidedly opposed to the idea of providing preferential treatment of minorities, in the recent surveys.

SPOTLIGHT ON LEGAL IMMIGRATION TO THE UNITED STATES

Migration Policy Institute, June 2009

<http://www.migrationinformation.org/USfocus/display.cfm?id=730>

In 2008, nearly 1.1 million people were granted lawful permanent resident status.

There were 1,107,126 immigrants who were granted legal residence in 2008. Of those, 466,558 (42.1 percent) were new arrivals who entered the country in 2008, and 640,568 (57.9 percent) were status adjusters. The status adjusters arrived in the United States in any year before 2008, but their green card applications were approved during 2008.

SUPREME COURT APPOINTMENT PROCESS: ROLES OF THE PRESIDENT, JUDICIARY COMMITTEE, AND SENATE

Congressional Research Service, May 6, 2009

<http://fpc.state.gov/documents/organization/124657.pdf>

The appointment of a Supreme Court Justice is an event of major significance in American politics. Each appointment is important because of the enormous judicial power the Supreme Court exercises as the highest appellate court in the federal judiciary. Appointments are usually infrequent, as a vacancy on the nine-member Court may occur only once or twice, or never at all, during a particular President's years in office. Under the Constitution, Justices on the Supreme Court receive lifetime appointments. Such job security in the government has been conferred solely on judges and, by constitutional design, helps insure the Court's independence from the President and Congress.

SUPREME COURT NOMINATIONS, 1789 - 2009: ACTIONS BY THE SENATE, THE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE, AND THE PRESIDENT

Congressional Research Service, May 13, 2009

<http://fpc.state.gov/documents/organization/124658.pdf>

The process of appointing Supreme Court Justices has undergone changes over two centuries, but its most basic feature, the sharing of power between the President and Senate, has remained unchanged. To receive a lifetime appointment to the Court, a candidate must first be nominated by the President and then confirmed by the Senate. A key role also has come to be played midway in the process by the Senate Judiciary Committee.

2008 PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN FINANCIAL ACTIVITY SUMMARIZED: RECEIPTS NEARLY DOUBLE 2004 TOTAL

U.S. Federal Election Commission, June 8, 2009

<http://www.fec.gov/press/press2009/20090608PresStat.shtml>

Financial activity of 2008 presidential candidates and national party convention committees increased 80% in receipts over the 2004 presidential election, totaling more than \$1.8 billion. The Republican presidential nominee, Sen. John McCain (AZ), received \$84.1 million in public funds to conduct his general election campaign and raised an additional \$46.4 million for legal and accounting expenses. The Democratic presidential nominee, then-Sen. Barack Obama (IL), raised a total of \$745.7 million in private funds for his primary nomination and general election campaign. It was the first time in the history of presidential public financing that a major party nominee declined to accept public funds for the general election.

WORKING LEARNERS: EDUCATING OUR ENTIRE WORKFORCE FOR SUCCESS IN THE 21ST CENTURY

Center for American Progress, June 2009

http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2009/06/pdf/working_learners.pdf

Working learners are the key to increasing the numbers of Americans with postsecondary credentials, which in turn is key to ensuring the U.S. economy remains globally competitive in the 21st century.

All previous web alerts can be found at:
<http://france.usembassy.gov/politics-alert.html>